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Inuit Children's Leisure Time Activities: Report

2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey

Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

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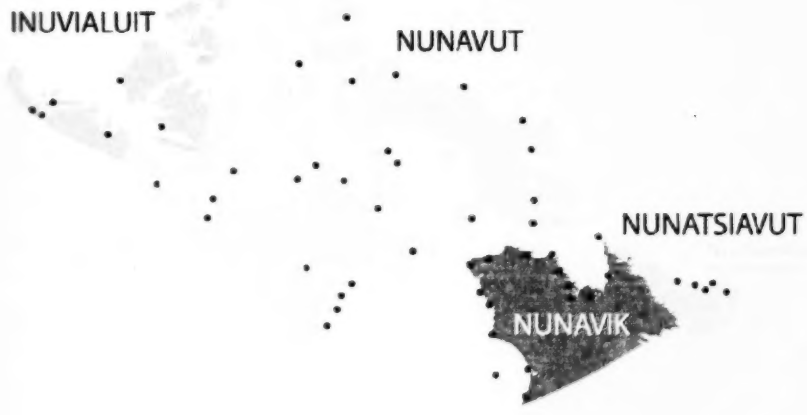
Introduction

This report examines the leisure time activities of Inuit children in the four Inuit regions in Canada: the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest territories, the territory of Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador (see figure 1). In the general population, leisure activities, or those activities which occupy children's time outside of school, have been shown to impact children's psychological and social well-being (Cooper et al., 1999; Mahoney and Cairns, 1997; Offord et al., 1998; Zaff et al., 2003). While there has been public interest in participation rates for leisure activities, there is very little research on activities for Aboriginal children, and even less with an Inuit-specific focus. Previous research has shown that a similar proportion of Aboriginal children in Canada participate in sports at least once per week compared to their non-Aboriginal peers (approximately 65%) (Findlay and Kohen, 2007). However, little is known about participation in other types of leisure activities. It is therefore of interest to examine Inuit children's leisure time activities, such as arts and music activities, clubs and / or group participation, cultural activities, time spent with elders, and hours per day in sedentary activities.

Figure 1: Inuit regions



Data and methodology

Data from the Children and Youth Component of the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) were used to create this report. In partnership with national Aboriginal organizations[1], the APS was conducted to collect information on the living conditions and lifestyles of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003). Specifically, the purpose of the APS was to identify the needs of Aboriginal Peoples on issues such as health, language, schooling, and housing. The APS is a post-censal survey, meaning that the APS target population was selected based upon responses to the 2001 Census. Two questions from the long form version of the Census questionnaire were used to identify the APS Inuit target population (see appendix A). The overall response rate to the APS was 84.1%.

1. The following National Aboriginal Organizations were involved in the development process: Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council, the National Association of Friendship Centres, and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Proxy reports were provided by the person most knowledgeable (PMK) of the child. The PMK was by and large the child's biological mother or father (82% of the time), although in some cases the child's grandparent (6%) or aunt / uncle (3%) was the respondent. Parents were asked to report the frequency of participation in leisure time activities (e.g., sports, time spent with elders; see appendix B for a list of questions). Information was not available on the season of participation (e.g., summer versus winter). For the purpose of this report all responses were categorized to reflect participation in the activity once per week or more versus less than once per week, except in the case of television and video games. For these two activities, information on daily participation was available, and responses were categorized based on 3 or more hours per day watching television and two or more hours per day playing video games versus less than that amount. The latter two cut-offs were selected based on the data (using 3 or more hours of videogames would have required suppression of the estimates due to Statistics Canada suppression rules).

In order to generalize the results to the entire Inuit population, population weights were applied to the analysis. Statistically significant comparisons presented in the current report reflect t-test differences at the $p < .05$ level. A bootstrapping technique was applied to variance estimation to account for the complex survey design of the APS.

Identifying Inuit children

The focus of this report is Inuit children aged 4 to 14 years. A child was considered Inuk if their parent responded, "Yes, Inuit," to the question, "Is ... an Aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit?" Included here are children with Inuit identity and those who identified with more than one Aboriginal group (e.g., Inuit and Métis and / or North American Indian identity).

For some of the leisure time activities, Inuit children were compared to all children in Canada[2] to investigate differences in participation rates. When available, information from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) was compared to Inuit children (see appendix B for a list of survey questions from the Aboriginal People Survey (APS) and the NLSCY.) In the NLSCY, two questions were asked regarding children's sport participation. In the current report these questions were summed to reflect total sports participation per week. Information was not available on non-Inuit children's time spent on cultural activities and time spent with elders. In addition, information on non-Inuit children's television and videogame usage was not available for the comparable age group of children; therefore, comparisons with Inuit children were not performed for these activities.

In 2001, approximately four out of five Inuit children in Canada lived in one of four Inuit regions: the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories, the territory of Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec and Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador. Participation rates of children living in each of these four regions are also compared in this report. Approximately 3,800 Inuit children were interviewed in the 2001 APS, which represented 18,500 Inuit children in Canada. About 260 children were interviewed in the Inuvialuit region, 2,000 in Nunavut, 1,050 in Nunavik and 220 in Labrador. Information was also available for 230 Inuit children (15% of the total) who lived outside of these four areas. These children are included in the "All Inuit in Canada" category.

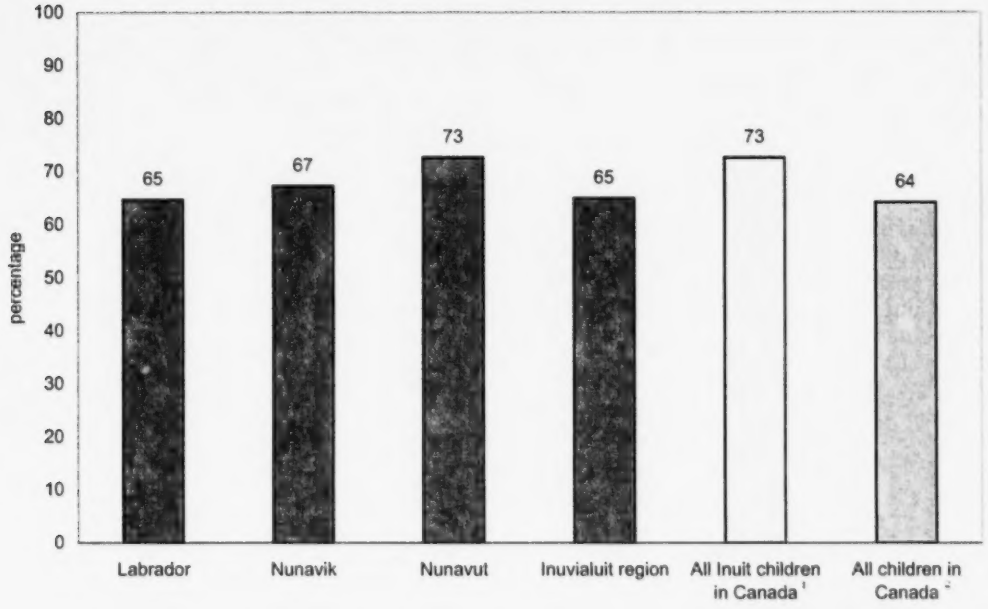
For 2001 APS purposes, "Labrador" (as referred to in this report) consisted of a slightly different set of communities than those that comprise the Nunatsiavut region. While Nunatsiavut includes Hopedale and excludes Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the reverse is true for the Labrador region as defined in this report. In this report, the Inuvialuit region includes Inuvialuit and Inuit living in Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok.

2. For this report, the term "all children in Canada" is used to refer to data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY 2000/01). Excluded are children living in the territories. However, some Inuit children living elsewhere in Canada may be included here.

Results

Sports participation

Chart 1
Inuit children were more likely to participate in sport at least once per week than children in all of Canada, 2001



1. All Inuit children in Canada represents the four Inuit regions as well as Inuit living outside of these regions, mainly in large cities in southern Canada.
2. National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), cycle 4, 2000/01, custom tabulation. Children living in the territories are excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001, Children's component.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth recommends that children participate in 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity (Health Canada and Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2002). Sport is one such type of activity. In 2001, almost three quarters (73%) of all Inuit children were found to participate in sports outside of school at least once per week and approximately one third (37%) participate 4 or more days per week (not shown).

Comparing Inuit children to their non-Inuit peers, Inuit children were more likely to participate in sport at least once per week than children in all of Canada (64%). Comparing the Inuit regions, a statistically significantly smaller share of Inuit children living in Nunavik participated at least once per week (67%) compared to children in Nunavut (73%). Approximately 65% of children living in Labrador and the Inuvialuit region participated at least once a week, which was not significantly different than other Inuit children.

Results (continued)

Art / music participation

Table 1
Art – Music participation, 2001

Region	Never or < Once per week	At least once per week
Labrador	74.6	25.4
Nunavik	84.1	15.9
Nunavut	81.0	19.0
Inuvialuit region	78.0	22.0
All Inuit children in Canada[1]	78.2	21.8
All children in Canada[2]	77.0	23.0

1. Total Inuit represents the four Inuit regions as well as Inuit living outside of these regions, mainly in larger cities in southern Canada.
2. National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), cycle 4, 2000/01, custom tabulation. Question wording is available in appendix B. Children living in the territories are excluded.

Note: By-region statistical comparisons are reported in the text.
Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001, Children's Component.

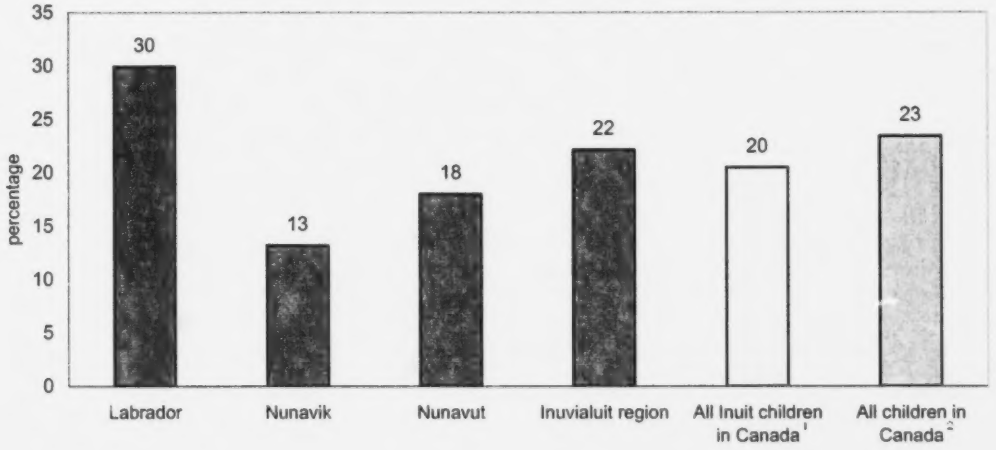
Aside from sports participation, previous research considering all Canadian children has also shown that children who participate in other extracurricular activities demonstrate greater well-being. Offord, Lipman, and Duku (1998) found that children aged 6 to 11 years who participated in the arts had a decreased likelihood of having one or more problems, including emotional or behavioural disorders, incidences of repeating a grade, or impairment in social relationships. It has been suggested that extracurricular activities influence child well-being by enhancing self-esteem and by structuring the child's peer group (Barber and Stone, 2003).

In 2001, similar shares of Inuit children (22%) and all children in Canada (23%) participated in arts and / or music at least once per week. Children living in the Nunavik region were less likely to participate at least once per week or more (16%) than were children in Labrador (25%) or the Inuvialuit region (22%).

Results (continued)

Clubs or groups (e.g., youth groups, drum groups, dance groups)

Chart 2
Inuit children slightly less likely to participate in clubs or groups at least once per week, 2001



1. All Inuit children in Canada represents the four Inuit regions as well as Inuit living outside of these regions, mainly in large cities in southern Canada.
2. National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), cycle 4, 2000/01, custom tabulation. Children living in the territories are excluded.

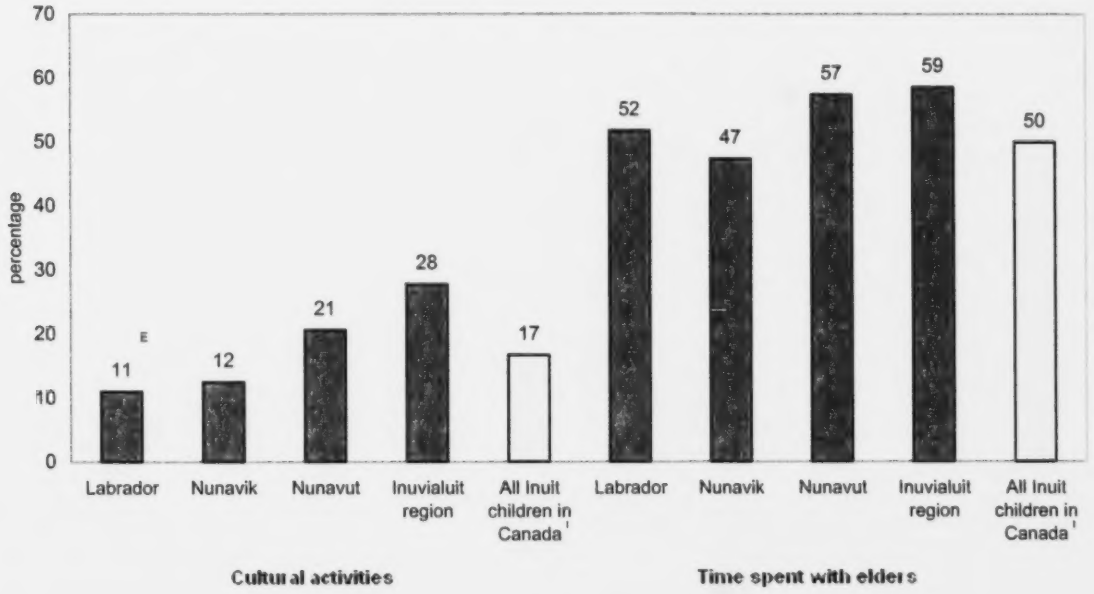
Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001, Children's component.

Similarly to arts and music participation, children's engagement in clubs or groups provides a context for peer involvement and consequently social and emotional skill development. In 2001, Inuit children were slightly less likely to participate in clubs or groups at least once per week (20%) than were non-Inuit children in general (23%), and this difference was again statistically significant. Children living in Nunavik were less likely to participate in clubs or groups at least once per week (13%) than children in all other regions. Children living in Labrador were more likely to participate in clubs or groups at least once per week (30%) than were children in Nunavut (18%).

Results (continued)

Cultural activities and time spent with elders

Chart 3
Inuit children's cultural activity participation and time spent with elders, 2001



1. All Inuit children in Canada represents the four Inuit regions as well as Inuit living outside of these regions, mainly in larger cities in southern Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001, Children's Component.

Extended kinship and cultural activities play an important role in Aboriginal society (Thompson et al., 2000). As such, it was of interest to examine participation in such activities and children's time spent with elders as two of the activities which might occupy their leisure time. In 2001, approximately 17% of Inuit children were reported by their parents to have participated in cultural activities at least once per week, and half (50%) were found to spend time with elders. Children in Labrador (11%) and Nunavik (12%) were less likely to participate in cultural activities once per week or more than were children living in Nunavut (21%) or the Inuvialuit region (28%). Similarly, a statistically significantly smaller share of children living in Nunavik were found to spend time with their elders at least once per week or more (47%) than did children in Nunavut (57%) or the Inuvialuit region (59%). Children living in Labrador were equally likely to spend time with elders as compared to all other regions. Information to compare to non-Inuit children was not available.

Results (concluded)

Sedentary activities

Table 2
Time spent watching television and playing on the computer or video games, 2001

Region	Time spent...			
	Watching television		Playing computer or video games	
	2 hrs per day or less	3 or more hrs per day	1 hr per day or less	2 or more hrs per day
Labrador	51.3	48.7	63.9	36.1
Nunavik	48.5	51.5	78.3	21.7
Nunavut	49.8	50.2	75.2	24.8
Inuvialuit region	55.6	44.4	63.7	36.3
All Inuit children in Canada[1]	55.2	44.8	76.1	23.9

1. Total Inuit represents the four Inuit regions as well as Inuit living outside of these regions, mainly in larger cities in southern Canada.
Note: By-region statistical comparisons are reported in the text.
Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001, Children's Component.

While diabetes rates among Inuit are much lower than in the First Nations population, the rates among Inuit are of concern (Young et al., 2007). Thus, factors which influence obesity require exploration. Watching television and playing video games, often dubbed "screen-time" activities, are two common sedentary behaviours for children that have been shown to be associated with obesity (Tremblay and Willms, 2003).

In 2001, 45% of Inuit children were reported to watch three or more hours of television per day, and 24% played two or more hours of video games. No significant differences were found between the Inuit regions in terms of the proportion of children watching three or more hours of television per day. Children living in Nunavik (22%) and Nunavut (25%) were significantly less likely than children living in the Labrador (36%) and Inuvialuit (36%) regions to play two or more hours of videogames per day.

Conclusions

In summary, almost three quarters of Inuit children participate in sports on a weekly basis. Approximately one in five Inuit children reported doing arts and music activities or clubs or groups once per week or more. It should be noted, however, that the availability of such activities in the Inuit regions is likely more limited than in other parts of the country. In addition, many Inuit children participate in community events, which may have a similar role. Few Inuit children were found to engage in weekly cultural activities although half spent time with elders at least once per week. Moreover, almost half of all Inuit children in Canada were found to watch three or more hours of television per day and one quarter to play two or more hours of videogames. The latter findings suggest that many Inuit children spend a large portion of the day in "screen-time" (sedentary) behaviours.

As compared to their non-Inuit peers, Inuit children were more likely to participate in sports but slightly less likely to participate in arts, music or clubs, groups. Finally, some differences were noted for Inuit children living in different Inuit regions suggesting that in general, Inuit children's participation in leisure activities may vary based on their region in which they live.

Appendix A:
Census questions used to determine the Inuit target population for the Aboriginal People Survey

Question 17: What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors? (persons who indicated Inuit ancestry were included in Inuit target population)

Question 18: Is this person an Aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo)? (persons who gave a positive response to "Inuit" were included in Inuit target population)

Appendix B:
Aboriginal Peoples Survey and National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth survey questions

	Aboriginal Peoples Survey (children's component), 2001	National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (non-Inuit comparison), 2001/02		
		Parent-report (ages 4 to 9)	Youth-report (ages 10 to 13)	Youth-report (age 14)
Sports	Outside of school hours, how often does ... play sports (including taking lessons)?	In the last 12 months, outside of school hours, how often has your child: taken part in sports with a coach or instructor (except dance or gymnastics)?	During the past 12 months, how often have you played sports WITH a coach or instructor (swimming lessons, baseball, hockey, etc.)?	Outside of school, during the past 12 months, how often have you played sports WITH a coach or instructor (swimming lessons, baseball, hockey, etc.)?
		In the last 12 months, outside of school hours, how often has your child: taken lessons or instruction in other organized physical activities with a coach or instructor such as dance, gymnastics or martial arts?	During the past 12 months, how often have you taken part in dance, gymnastics, karate or other groups or lessons, other than in gym class?	Outside of school, during the past 12 months, how often have you taken part in dance, gymnastics, karate or other groups or lessons (always organized outside of school)?
	Never, less than once per week, 1 to 3 times per week, 4 or more times per week	Almost never, about once a month, about once a week, a few times a week, most days	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week
Art music lessons	Outside of school hours how often does ...take part in art or music, groups or lessons?	In the last 12 months, outside of school hours, how often has your child: taken lessons or instruction in music, art or other non-sport activities?	During the past 12 months, how often have you taken part in art, drama or music groups, clubs or lessons outside of class?	Outside of school, during the past 12 months, how often have you taken part in art, drama or music groups, clubs or lessons (again outside of school)?
	Never, less than once per week, 1 to 3 times per week, 4 or more times per week	Almost never, about once a month, about once a week, a few times a week, most days	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week

Appendix B:
Aboriginal Peoples Survey and National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth survey questions (continued)

	Aboriginal Peoples Survey (children's component), 2001	National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (non-Inuit comparison), 2001/02		
		Parent-report (ages 4 to 9)	Youth-report (ages 10 to 13)	Youth-report (age 14)
Clubs	Outside of school hours, how often does ... take part in clubs or groups, such as youth groups, drum groups, dance groups?	In the last 12 months, outside of school hours, how often has your child: taken part in any clubs, groups or community programs with leadership, such as Beavers, Sparks or church groups? (ages 4 to 5) In the last 12 months, outside of school hours, how often has your child: taken part in any clubs, groups or community programs with leadership, such as Brownies, Cubs or church groups? (ages 6 to 9)	In the last 12 months, how often have you taken part in clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, 4-H club, community, church or other religious groups?	Outside of school, during the past 12 months, how often have you taken part in clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, 4-H club, community, church or other religious groups?
	Never, less than once per week, 1 to 3 times per week, 4 or more times per week	Almost never, about once a month, about once a week, a few times a week, most days	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week	Never, less than once a week, 1 to 3 times a week, 4 or more times a week
Cultural activities	Outside of school hours, how often does ... participate in culturally related activities? Never, less than once per week, 1 to 3 times per week, 4 or more times per week	Not available		

Appendix B:
Aboriginal Peoples Survey and National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth survey questions (concluded)

	Aboriginal Peoples Survey (children's component), 2001	National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (non-Inuit comparison), 2001/02		
		Parent-report (ages 4 to 9)	Youth-report (ages 10 to 13)	Youth-report (age 14)
Time with elders	Outside of school hours, how often does ... spend time with Elders? Never, less than once per week, 1 to 3 times per week, 4 or more times per week	Not available		
Television	On average, about how many hours per day, if any, does ... watch TV? (Round up to the nearest hour). None, 1 hour, 2 hours...7 hours	Not available		
Video games	On average, about how many hours per day, if any, does ... play computer or video games? (Round up to the nearest hour). None, 1 hour, 2 hours...7 hours	Not available		

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